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ABSTRACT

Early vocabularies of a language can help indigenous communities retrieve lost or forgotten vocabulary. Currently, there are very few fluent speakers of Tuscarora. As in other native communities, efforts are underway to reverse the decline in native language usage. One advantage the Tuscaroras have is that, since 1700, numerous researchers have recorded the language. Extensive vocabularies, texts, and a manuscript dictionary from the 19th Century exist. These materials were hidden away in various archives until recently. The paper presents lessons learned from two decades of experience re-eliciting data from early manuscript sources. One lesson is the importance of the decision about whether or not to take data from an earlier manuscript at face value or re-elicit the data from contemporary speakers. Another lesson concerns difficulties involved in figuring out what earlier researchers had actually recorded, since all languages change over time, and early sources may reflect earlier pronunciations, meanings, and vocabulary. Benefits of using early vocabularies include the fact that they can elicit memories of words that have been forgotten or lost. Five rules are provided for re-eliciting vocabulary from contemporary speakers: re-elicit, triangulate, compare, check credentials, and omit. (SM)

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Early Vocabularies and Dictionary Development
A Cautionary Note

Blair A. Rudes

For the many communities where knowledge of the indigenous language has declined over the past century, early vocabularies of the language and longer archival and published linguistic works can serve as invaluable tools for retrieving forgotten or lost words when preparing a dictionary. As a language declines in use, there are ever fewer opportunities for language learners to hear the language. As a result, they may not learn certain terms that occur only rarely and may substitute more frequent terms when the need arises. For example, in the past, the Tuscarora language possessed several different words to name different kinds of feathers, including uhrá?neh *large feather, wing feather, quill*, uhsnú?kreh *small or body feather*, uθnù·reh *feather, down*; and yuhrá?kwa?t *tail feather.* Today, only the word uhrá?neh is in common use in the eastern dialect of the language spoken on the Tuscarora Indian Reservation in New York State and only the word uhsnú?sreh (from earlier uhsnú?kreh) was recorded from the last speakers of the western dialect of the language on the Six Nations Reserve in Ontario. In addition, individuals who spoke a language fluently as a child, but have not used the language since, often times repress their knowledge of the language and need some external stimulus to jog their memory. Also, all languages change over time. Some words are replaced by new words, while other words that have outlived their usefulness are lost from the language. Early vocabularies of a language can help a community in these situations to retrieve lost or forgotten vocabulary.

My Own Research

Presently, there are fewer than a handful of fluent speakers of Tuscarora. As in other native communities in similar straights, efforts have been underway for a number of years to reverse the decline in use of the language. One advantage the Tuscaroras have over some other communities is that, between 1700 and the present, numerous researchers—both non-Tuscaroras and Tuscaroras—recorded the language. Extensive vocabularies, texts, and even a manuscript dictionary from the Nineteenth Century exist. However, until recently, these materials were hidden away in numerous archival sources and available primarily to non-Tuscarora scholars.

Early in my work with Tuscarora speakers I visited the National Anthropological Archives of the Smithsonian Institution and saw the voluminous records of the Tuscarora language written down by J.N.B. Hewitt—himself a Tuscarora—during his employment at the Bureau of American Ethnology in the late 1800s and early 1900s (Judd, 1967; Rudes, 1994; Tooker & Graymont, forthcoming). When I informed the speakers I was working with of the material, they decided the material should be made more widely available and we began the process of obtaining copies and re-eliciting the texts. A little over ten years later the re-

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elicitation of the texts was complete and they were published by the Canadian Museum of Civilization (Rudes & Crouse, 1987).

While the texts were being prepared for publication, I compiled a field lexicon of the Tuscarora vocabulary obtained from the re-elicitation, which was published by the University of Manitoba (Rudes, 1987). Having accomplished that, I turned my attention to the extensive additional materials on the Tuscarora language in the National Anthropological Archives (e.g., field notes by J.N.B. Hewitt and Albert S. Gatschet), as well as other archives, viz., the American Philosophical Society (texts and field notes by Anthony F.C. Wallace), the University of Rochester (field notes by Lewis Henry Morgan), and the North Carolina State Archives (Tuscarora vocabulary in early colonial documents). All of this material was re-elicited from contemporary speakers of the language. These data were combined with my own field notes and field notes kindly lent me by colleagues including Floyd G. Lounsbury and Michael K. Foster and the data in published sources to produce the *Tuscarora-English/English-Tuscarora Dictionary* (Rudes, 1999). From two decades experience in re-eliciting data from early manuscript sources I have learned several lessons, which I discuss below.

Lesson One: To Re-elicit or Not to Re-elicit

A first lesson that I learned is that one should take one's time in deciding whether to take data from earlier manuscripts at face value or re-elicit the data from contemporary speakers. Re-elicitation is both time consuming and, in many cases, boring to both the researcher and the speakers. In essence, the researcher and speakers are repeating the effort exerted by the earlier researcher and speakers who prepared the vocabulary. Such duplication of effort takes precious time away from other activities such as the elicitation of new, previously unrecorded vocabulary or the preparation of texts or language lessons. Time is a valuable commodity, in particular in the case of endangered languages, and should not needlessly be wasted on re-eliciting data that is otherwise reliable. Thus, there is a strong temptation to just use the vocabulary from the older manuscripts without bothering to check it with contemporary speakers.

In my own case, I early made the decision to re-elicit all data recorded by researchers who were not trained linguists. In hindsight, this decision was somewhat too broad since the data transcribed by J.N.B. Hewitt, by far the largest source of early Tuscarora data, proved with very few exceptions to be completely reliable.

Lessons from Re-elicitation

The next several lessons I learned concerned the difficulties involved in figuring out what earlier researchers had actually recorded. All languages change over time and early sources may reflect earlier pronunciations, meanings, and vocabulary. I will illustrate with words taken the vocabulary of Tuscarora as spoken in the Carolinas recorded in 1701 by John Lawson, Surveyor General for the British Crown (Lawson, 1709).

We know from comparison of Tuscarora vocabulary with vocabulary from other Iroquoian languages that the language has undergone several important changes in pronunciation over time. One of these changes was that earlier clusters of *hsr developed in western Tuscarora into *hstr and developed in eastern Tuscarora into *hst. For example, the Proto-Northern Iroquoian word for legging, *yorihsr'a?, appears in western Tuscarora as urihstreh and in eastern Tuscarora as urihsteh. The form cited by Lawson is ⟨Oowissera⟩ *A stocking*, which probably represents 'urihsra?. Lawson's recording of the word thus suggests that the change had not yet occurred by the turn of the seventeenth century.

A second example is provided by the words for snow and "drest-skin" in Lawson's vocabulary. In modern Tuscarora the verb meaning to snow has the form /-tkwę-/ as in waʔká·tkwęʔ *it began to snow*. However, comparison with other Northern Iroquoian languages shows that, in Proto-Northern Iroquoian, the verb had the form *-nkwę- (compare Huron-Wyandot ⟨ˌang8endī⟩ *neger, faire de la nege* [Fraser, 1920, p. 300]). In the Lawson vocabulary, the verb appears in the word ⟨Acaunque⟩ *Snow*, probably representing *waʔká·nkwęʔ and indicating that the change of *nk to *tk had not yet occurred. However, Lawson also cites the word ⟨Cotcoo⟩ *Drest-skin*. In all probability this is the same word as modern Tuscarora ká·tkęʔ *blood, gore*, which derives from Proto-Northern Iroquoian *ká·nk'ǫʔ *blood, gore* (compare Huron-Wyandot ⟨ˌangon⟩ *sang* [Fraser, 1920, p. 450]). Thus, the evidence suggests that the change of *nk to *tk was ongoing (i.e., undergoing lexical diffusion) at the time Lawson did his work.

Over time, speakers replace words in the language for a variety of reasons and older vocabularies often illustrate this phenomenon. For example, as shown in Table 1 below, Lawson recorded words for nine, pot, and yesterday that have subsequently been replaced in Tuscarora for reasons unknown. The authenticity of the words Lawson recorded is confirmed by the fact that related words appear in other Northern Iroquoian languages.[1] For whatever reason, Tuscarora speakers had simply replaced these inherited words by new words by the Nineteenth Century.

Table 1. Vocabulary Replacement

Proto-Northern Iroquoian	*Old Tuscarora*	*Modern Tuscarora*
*wá?tr'ǫʔ *9*	⟨Wearah⟩ ('wáʔrę?) *Nine*	níhręh *9*
*yǫ́t'ak *pot*	⟨Ocnok⟩ ('ú·ʔnak) *A Pot*	uʔnę́·weh *pot*
*ahset- *yesterday*	⟨Ousotto⟩ ('uhsé·thuʔ) *yesterday*	thé·ʔnęʔ *yesterday*

Frequently, miscommunication between the early recorder and speakers, and limitations in the linguistic abilities of the recorder result in errors. Recorders may ask for a word that does not exist in the language, and the speaker may make up something on the spot, as shown in Part A of Table 2. Or, owing to imperfect knowledge of the recorder's language, the speaker may misunder-

stand what the recorder is asking and give an imprecise translation. In the case of the examples cited in Part B of Table 2, the speaker apparently thought Lawson was asking about the weather conditions in the first instance, and in the second case, the speaker did not realize Lawson was trying to distinguish an indigenous person of the Americas from other human beings. In the third example, the speaker thought Lawson wanted the word for the particular kind of paint he was pointing at, rather than the generic word. Similar misunderstandings account for the incorrect glosses for the remaining words in Part B of Table 2.

Recorders may also make mistakes in copying down the information they receive. This appears to be what happened when Lawson got the words for 100 and 1000 backward, as shown in Part C of Table 2. One must also be alert, in

Table 2. Researcher-Speaker Miscommunciations

A. Recorder asks for non-existent word

Old Tuscarora	Modern Tuscarora
⟨Trossa⟩ *A hat*	utráhseh *mushroom, fungus*
⟨Ooratsa⟩ *A Jew's harp*	urę́·θeh *bowstring*
⟨Ootosne⟩ *Fishgig*	utáhsneh *stick*

B. Speaker misconstrues question

Old Tuscarora	Modern Tuscarora
⟨Ootauh-ne⟩ *Day*	utę́·nęh *sunshine*; wutę́·nęh *it is sunny* (uwę́·teh *day*)
⟨Unqua⟩ *Indians*	ę́·kweh *human being* (ękwehę́·we *Indian, Tuscarora*)
⟨Quaunt⟩ *Paint*	kwę́ht *red ocher, vermillon* (uhθúhkweh *paint, dye, color*)
⟨Chi[h]qua⟩ *Stick*	učíhkweh *knot of a tree* (utáhsneh *stick*)
⟨Oowaara⟩ *Hair*	awę́ʔreh *fur* (ukyéʔweh *hair*)
⟨Chaunoc⟩ *Otter*	čúʔakęʔ *beaver* (čaʔkawì·nę *otter*)
⟨Ka⟩ *There*	kęʔ *where* (héʔthu *there*)

C. Recorder miscopies responses

Old Tuscarora	Modern Tuscarora
⟨Youch se⟩ *Hundred*	uyáhsteh *1000*
⟨Ki you se⟩ *Thousand*	kayáhsti *100*

D. Speaker gives "trade language" response

Old Tuscarora	Modern Tuscarora
⟨Wartsauh⟩ *Ten*	wáhθhę· *10*
⟨Unche scauwhau⟩ *Eleven*	ę́·či θkáheʔr *11*
⟨Nectec scauhau⟩ *Twelve*	né·kti· θkáheʔr *12*
⟨Wartsau scauhau⟩ *Twenty*	newáhθhę· *20*

particular in very early vocabularies, for the appearance of 'trade language' words, i.e., words that have been simplified to facilitate communication between speakers of different languages. The word for 20 in Tuscarora is newáhθhę·, which consists of the word for 10 and a prefix meaning two. This word is inherited from Proto-Northern Iroquoian and cognates occur in all of the other Northern Iroquoian languages.[3] As shown in Part D of Table 2, the construction Lawson cites literally means 10-teen. It consists of the word for ten plus another word that is added to the numbers 1 through 9 to form 11 through 19. Apparently, this construction evolved as a simpler way of communicating 20 to non-Tuscarora speakers.

Finally, old dialect differences that have not persisted or are rare in the modern language may be represented in the early vocabularies. In the Tuscarora texts recorded by J.N.B. Hewitt in the late 19th century the augmentative enclitic consistently is written ⟨u-wĭ'⟩, as in ⟨u-nĕ*-se-hu-wĭ'⟩ *big house*. In the modern language, this enclitic is pronounced [-uʔy] or [-uʔ], as in unęhsehúʔy *big house* ~ unęhsehúʔ *big house*. We know from other evidence that the Tuscarora language underwent a change whereby the resonants /r n w y/ metathesized (reversed positions) with the consonants /h ʔ/ whenever they came in contact (e.g., Proto-Northern Iroquoian *ó·y'aʔ *other* became, with loss of the final vowel and metathesis, modern Tuscarora ú·ʔy *other*).[2] Hewitt's data suggest that there were some exceptions to this change in the late 1800, one of which was the augmentative suffix. This was confirmed one day when, while walking in the woods with a group of Tuscarora speakers, I asked them all for the name for a particular plant I was pointing at, wild sarsaparilla. Most of the speakers gave the word čuhneʔre·θʔúʔy. However, one elderly lady's pronunciation differed from the others and, when I asked her to say the word again, she said čuhneʔre·θʔúyʔ with unmetathesized /-yʔ/, confirming the earlier dialect difference in the Nineteenth Century records.

Benefits of Using Early Vocabularies

Given all the potential errors in early vocabularies, one might ask why bother using them at all. In the case of Lawson's vocabulary, for example, the answer appears in Table 3. None of the vocabulary presented there appeared in the fieldnotes of any contemporary linguists or in the writings of contemporary speakers. No one had bothered to ask about opossums or alligators because they are rare in the environment in which the Tuscarora live today. Other words did not occur because of the narrow meaning of the words (e.g., man exempt from work, mat made of corn husks) or because of topic avoidance (e.g., fart, feces). Yet, Tuscarora speakers knew these words. It only took looking at the Lawson vocabulary and thinking about how they would say each of these things for them to remember the word. This situation was repeated each time I re-elicited another early vocabulary. As a result, countless words that had been forgotten or lost from the language were retrieved.

Table 3. Information Gleaned from Lawson's Vocabulary

Old Tuscarora	Modern Tuscarora
(Acaunque) *Snow*	waʔká·tkwęʔ *it began to snow*
(Oo-ross-soo) *Shoe*	uráhsuʔ *shoe* (rare except in compounds)
(Ooyaura) *Basket*	uyà·reh *bag, sack*
(Teetha) *King*	ratírher *man exempt from work*
(Utquera) *A T—d*	utkwéhreh *feces*
(Uttena) *A F—t*	utíʔneh *fart*
(Ou-negh-ra) *Flints*	uhnà·reh *flint*
(Ooyethne) *A Mat*	uyęʔneh *mat made of corn husks*
(Che-ra) *A Possum*	číʔreʔ *opossum*
(Utserarauh) *Alligator*	θríʔrar *alligator*

Checks on Re-elicitation

As discussed above, there are numerous types of errors and inconsistencies that recorders, speakers, and later individuals who recopy early vocabularies may introduce, and discovering these errors reassured me that I had made the right choice in re-eliciting the data from living speakers rather than just taking all of the early vocabulary at face value. In the process of my work I came up with five rules that I continue to follow as best I can today. They are:

1. Re-elicit: Check older words with contemporary speakers whenever possible.
   (a) However, remember in so doing that the pronunciation, meaning or form may have changed over time; and that the word may have dropped out of use or never have been used in the dialects of contemporary speakers.
   (b) Therefore, do not assume that either the older source or the modern speaker is wrong. One may be, or both may be right.
2. Triangulate: Where a word is unknown in the modern language, look in other older sources to see if you find the word and confirm its prior existence.
3. Compare: Look at other, related languages and see if the word exists there. Keep in mind the expected differences in pronunciation between the two languages. (e.g., presence of cognate words for 'nine', 'pot', and 'yesterday' in other Northern Iroquoian languages with the expected differences in pronunciation confirms the accuracy of Lawson's record of these words, although all three have been replaced.)
4. Check credentials: If none of the three steps outlined above proves fruitful, it is still possible that the word in the older source is correct. Although a number of scholars collected data on the Catawba language, many vocabulary items appear in only one source. In such cases, it is necessary to examine the credentials of the researcher who collected the data. In the case of Catawba data, great faith may be placed in the field notes of Frank Siebert, Raven McDavid, and William Sturtevant, owing to their linguistic training and length of exposure to the language. Less faith may be placed in the

work of Frank Speck and Albert Gatschet (who were poor phoneticians) and Red Thunder Cloud (who was a speaker of Catawba-as-a-second language).

5. Omit: In some cases, it may be necessary to omit questionable vocabulary from other sources from the dictionary. This decision should be made by contemporary speakers after all of the above efforts have failed.

Notes

[1]Reflexes in other Northern Iroquoian languages of *wáʔtrʼǫʔ *9* are Oneida wá·tluʔ and Onondaga wáʔtę·ʔ. Reflexes of *yó·tʼak *pot* are Oneida ú·tak and Mohawk ú·ta. Words showing the root *ahset- *yesterday* are Huron-Wyandot ⟨achitek⟩, Onondaga ahsé·tęh and Susquehannock ⟨shehaitah⟩.

[2]Reflexes of *ó·yʼaʔ in other Northern Iroquoian languages include Huron-Wyandot ⟨8a⟩ *autre* (Fraser, 1920, p. 86), Cayuga, Mohawk ó·yaʔ *other* and Oneida oyá· *other*.

[3]The words meaning twenty in the other Northern Iroquoian languages are Cayuga tewáhshę·, Huron-Wyandot ⟨te8a'sen⟩, Mohawk tewáhsv, Oneida tewáhsv, Onondaga tewáshę·, Seneca tewáshę·h.

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